1902MNRAS..62..629W

Old Cape Records of Comets. By R. T. A. Innes.

In arranging the old records of the Cape Observatory I came across a letter giving some records of comets seen from the Cape in the seventeenth century. With Sir David Gill's sanction I transmit a copy of it. The year of the letter is not given. It was probably written in 1858 to 1860, but the exact date is immaterial.

February 28.

My Dear Sir,—In my rapid progress through the old journals my eye has been caught by the notices of which I annex the translations. I may have passed over some others from the impossibility of attempting to do more than skim, but if there are any years in particular during which a more particular examination would [be] interesting to you, pray let me know the years, and I shall not fail to look more closely.—I am, &c., (Signed) D. Moolin.

T. Maclear, Esq.

1664 December 15.—"About midnight, with a sky partially clouded, we all here saw a star with a darkish ray or tail, which it is said showed itself much more clearly and distinctly about 3 o'clock when it was near day; the star rose in the East and the tail pointed directly North."

1686, Monday, August 12.—"This night appeared in the 5th house of the heavens, at one o'clock, in the horizon, *a comet*, corresponding in longitude (?) with *Saturn* and *Venus*, on the left shoulder of the *Hare*. S. Lat. 18° 4′, Long. 80° 8′. The tail extended right East and West to the length of 35 Celestial Degrees, in *Gemini*."

1689 November 24.—"A star with a tail was seen in the [MS. defaced]."

1689 November 25.—"This morning about 4 o'clock the said tailed star was again seen, which soon after disappeared as the Sun rose."

1689 December 9.—"This morning at 3 o'clock the tailed star showed itself very distinctly, the tail was more than 4 degrees long."

1689 December 24.—"The tailed star no longer seen."

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On the Place of a Star near the Variable RU Herculis. (Correction to former paper.) By F. A. Bellamy.

In a letter, Fr. Hagen has kindly drawn attention to a discrepancy between his observation and the position of star No. 19 as given in my paper (*Monthly Notices*, lxii. p. 75). Upon examination the cause was found to be in the transcription from the original measure sheets to the computation forms preliminary to conversion of measured coordinates to R.A. and Dec.: the line of figures opposite star No. 19 should read thus :—

19 11·0 8·3363 5·6320 $6^{m}\ 16^{s}{\cdot}76$ $23'\ 7''{\cdot}4$

The computations have been examined for the other stars but no further errors were found.

On Mr. Love's Formula for the Wave-Lengths of Nebular Lines.
By W. H. Wright.

(*Communicated by the Secretaries.*)

In the May number of the *Monthly Notices* of the Royal Astronomical Society, Mr. E. F. J. Love publishes a note on a relation which he considers to exist among the wave-lengths of some of the nebular lines. The supposed law, expressed in the general form adopted by Runge and others in their work on line series in the spectra of some of the elements, is as follows :

$$\lambda^{-1} = 25739 + 43108\, n^{-2} - 1412208\, n^{-4} \qquad \ldots \qquad \ldots \qquad (1)$$

Such a law would be of the greatest interest and importance, not only by virtue of the fact that it would bring another spectrum into the line-series class, but also on account of the light it would shed on the composition of the nebulæ by correlating a certain number of the "unknown" lines, and indicating their common origin. But, great as is the desideratum for such an expression of relation, the writer is inclined to doubt that any physical significance attaches to Mr. Love's formula. A number of reasons for this point of view will be given as briefly as possible.

In the following table the values of λ as determined from equation (1) are tabulated with n as argument :

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